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Rome awards contract for study of software packages

by Francis L. Crumb, Information Directorate

ROME, N.Y. — The Air Force Research Laboratory (AFRL) Information Directorate has awarded a \$65,897 contract to WetStone Technologies Inc. of Cortland, N.Y. for a study to determine a process of verifying the effectiveness of software patches.

The three-month agreement, “Feasibility of Software Patch Verification,” is funded by the federal Department of Homeland Security.

“WetStone researchers will determine the feasibility of developing a process that verifies critical information system software patches behave as intended and introduce only the specific functionality identified for that patch,” said Mary L. Denz, program manager in the directorate’s Defensive Information

Warfare Branch. “The results of this effort and the potential for developing a meaningful scoring model to determine the risk of applying or not applying the patch will be presented in a report.”

A patch is a piece of code inserted to fix software coding that has been found to contain security vulnerability. Patches are not necessarily the best solution for a particular problem and software developers frequently develop a better solution when they package their product for its next release.

The WetStone report will include recommendations outlining a course of action for improving the patch methodologies of organizations that manage critical information systems. The technology could eventually benefit commercial and private computer operators targeted by malicious attacks. @